

CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A computer-implemented method for distributing interactive data to a plurality of users over a computer network, the method comprising:
 - 5 processing a series of the interactive data, the interactive data being synchronized with a performance of audio-visual content; and
 - distributing the interactive data to the plurality of users over the computer network, wherein the distributing is synchronized with the contemporaneous performance of the audio-visual content.
- 10 2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the audio-visual content includes audio-only content, visual-only content, and combined audio and visual content.
3. The method of Claim 1, wherein the audio-visual content is received via a
15 broadcast signal.
4. The method of Claim 1, wherein the interactive data includes an interactive event.
5. The method of Claim 1, wherein the interactive data includes a link to a remote
20 computer resource.
6. The method of Claim 5, wherein the link includes a URL.
7. The method of Claim 5, wherein the link includes a label describing the remote
25 computer resource.
8. The method of Claim 1, wherein the interactive data includes information identifying a broadcast signal by carrier.

9. The method of Claim 4, further comprising:
recording the interactive events in a computer storage medium.
10. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:
uploading the series into at least one Web server.
- 5 11. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:
extracting the series from a broadcast transmission.
12. The method of Claim 4, wherein each interactive event is marked with a
10 timestamp at the moment of the extracting.
13. The method of Claim 12, further comprising:
receiving a plurality of event updation requests from the plurality of client
computers over the computer network; and
15 performing the distributing for a particular client computer in response to
receiving an updation request from the particular client computer.
14. The method of Claim 13, further comprising:
wherein the event updation request received from the particular client computer
20 includes information identifying the most current interactive event received by the
particular client computer;
determining whether any of the interactive events in the uploaded series is more
current than the interactive event identified in the event updation request; and
if a more current interactive event in the uploaded series is identified, distributing
25 the identified interactive event to the particular client computer.
15. The method of Claim 14, further comprising:
if more than one interactive event in the uploaded series is determined to be more
current than the interactive event identified in the event updation request, distributing the
30 next most current interactive event in the uploaded series to the particular client
computer.

16. The method of Claim 4, further comprising:
receiving a selection of one of the distributed interactive events from a particular
client computer, wherein the selection identifies information retrievable from a server
5 computer connected to the computer network.
17. The method of Claim 16, further comprising:
storing a record of the selection in a computer storage medium.
- 10 18. The method of Claim 16, further comprising:
receiving the selection as an HTTP command sent by a Web browser executing in
the particular client computer.
- 15 19. The method of Claim 16, further comprising:
sending a request for the information identified by the selection to the server
computer identified by the selection, wherein the request includes an instruction directing
the server computer to send the linked information to the particular client computer.
- 20 20. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:
receiving multiple series of interactive events over the computer network, wherein
each series is embedded in a different live broadcast signal; and
distributing each series to a portion of the plurality of users over the computer
network, wherein the distributing for each series is synchronized with the corresponding
live broadcast signal originating the respective series.
- 25 21. The method of Claim 20, further comprising:

determining which portion of the plurality of users to distribute a particular series based on a request received from each of the plurality of users, wherein each request identifies the particular series to be distributed to the requesting user.

5 22. The method of Claim 20, further comprising:
 uploading each series of interactive events into a plurality of Web servers within a Web server cluster.

10 23. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:
 generating the series via execution of a computer program.

24. The method of Claim 23, wherein the computer program is a scripting program.

15 25. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:
 generating at least one interactive event; and
 distributing the event to at least one of the plurality of users, wherein the event is inserted within the series of interactive television events.

20 26. The method of Claim 25, wherein the generating includes executing a scripting program.

25 27. The method of Claim 25, further comprising:
 receiving a selection of the generated event from a particular client computer, wherein the selected generated event identifies information retrievable from a server computer connected to the computer network.

28. The method of Claim 27, storing a record of the selection in a database.

30 29. The method of Claim 27, wherein the selection is received as an HTTP command sent by a Web browser executing in the particular client computer.

30. The method of Claim 27, further comprising:
sending a request for the information identified by the selection to the server
computer identified by the selection, wherein the request includes an instruction directing
5 the server computer to send the linked information to the particular client computer.
31. A computer system for distributing a series of interactive television events to a
plurality of users over a computer network, the method comprising:
a first computer connected to the computer network;
a first computer program executing in the first computer, the first computer
10 program including computer instructions for:
receiving the series of interactive events over the computer network,
wherein the series is embedded in a live broadcast signal; and
sending the series to at least one second computer;
the second computer connected to the first computer and to at least one client
15 computer via the computer network;
a second computer program executing in the second computer, the second
computer program including computer instructions for:
receiving the series of interactive events from the first computer; and
sending the series to the client computer in response to a request received
20 from the client computer.
32. The computer system of Claim 31, further comprising:
a third computer connected to the first computer; and
a third computer program executing in the third computer, the computer program
25 including computer instructions for:
extracting a series of interactive events from a live broadcast signal; and
sending the series to the first computer.
33. The computer system of Claim 31, further comprising:
30 a fourth computer connected to the client computer via the computer network; and

a fourth computer program executing in the fourth computer, the fourth computer program including computer instructions for:

receiving a selection of one of the distributed interactive events from a particular client computer, wherein the selection identifies information retrievable from a server computer connected to the computer network; and

sending a request for the information identified by the selection to the server computer identified by the selection, wherein the request includes an instruction directing the server computer to send the linked information to the particular client computer.

34. The computer system of Claim 31, further comprising:

a fourth computer program executing in the first computer, the fourth computer program including computer instructions for:

generating an interactive event;

inserting the generated interactive event within the series; and

sending the series with the inserted event to the second computer.